

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Invasive Crayfish

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Biologists with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission are asking anglers to help stop the spread of the rusty crayfish — a destructive, non-native crayfish that has invaded the upper Catawba River in western North Carolina.

The rusty crayfish, which measures about 5 inches long, is native to the Ohio River watershed but can now be found in Canada and 17 other states, including North Carolina. Anglers can identify the rusty crayfish by a rust-colored spot on its sides, just in front of the tail. They also have black bands on the tips of their claws.

Biologists first discovered the rusty crayfish in 2007 in the North Fork Catawba River, just upstream of Lake James in McDowell County. Since then, it has expanded 10 miles upstream in the North Fork Catawba River and 11 miles upstream in the Catawba River.

Any angler who finds a rusty crayfish should kill it immediately, note its location, freeze it, and email the Commission at [Thomas.russ@ncwildlife.org](mailto:Thomas.russ@ncwildlife.org).

Rusty crayfish are aggressive and known to feed on fish eggs, as well as vegetation, reducing habitat for native aquatic animals. Often used as bait, it's suspected that nonresident anglers who brought bait from out of state may have accidentally introduced them into Lake James.

In North Carolina, it's illegal to transport, purchase, possess or sell rusty crayfish. Anglers can help prevent the spread of this crayfish and other invasive species by never releasing unused bait into waterways.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.